THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • MONDAY • AUGUST 18, 2025 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 16 • LATE CITY EDITION

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

SHUX BACK IN INDIA, GETS GRAND WELCOME

People waving the Tricolour and beating drums welcomed astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla at New Delhi airport. Shukla, who became the second Indian to undertake a spaceflight as part of the Axiom-4 mission, and his back-up astronaut-designate Prashanth Balakrishnan Nair were welcomed at the airport by Union Minister Jitendra Singh, Delhi CM Rekha Gupta, and others

GST: WHY SMALL CAN BE BIG FOR ECONOMY

IT may be pure chance that the next round of big-bang reforms directed towards India's internal economy has come at a time of turbulence on the external front. But it's a happy coincidence all the same that GST is getting pruned and simplified, offering a new impetus to consumption, at a time of very erratic weather for exports.

The vexed Goods and Services Tax, which has completed eight years with a complex ziggurat-like architecture, is finally getting rationalised into a slimmer, neater structure. Three Groups of Ministers will be meeting next week, on Wednesday and Thursday, to finalise its blueprint. That will be submitted to the GST Council for a final round of consultations.

If all goes well, come Diwali, our domestic bazaars will have an extra bounce to their step, freed from the knotted mass of reins imposed by multiple rates of taxation, which were often seen to be irrational in their very design. The new plan is to account for most items under two slabs — a lightweight 5% for mass goods and the higher one capped at 18%. Only 'sin goods' like tobacco etc will cop the special rate of 40%.

SANTWANA BHATTACHARYA
EDITOR

The benefits are intended to devolve to all sides of the base of India's pyramid. Compliance should become much easier for businesses. Farmers can hope for input costs to be reduced on vital items like fertilisers and seeds, which should create a vital surplus for millions of small Indians. That will enable them to join the class of ordinary consumers all around who can look forward to items of mass consumption getting cheaper.

On both sides, hopefully, small will get more beautiful. On one side, small and medium-sized businesses, the muscles that keep the economic backbone straight and help the body stay bouncy. On the other, the non-premium, budget segment of goods that crores of Indians buy.

The best-case scenario will see volumes offsetting revenue loss on account of lower taxes, which is the core doubt that states like Kerala may bring up at the GST Council deliberations. If that happens, it would be an echo of what happened in previous instances of global turbulence, like in 2008, when the buoyancy of our domestic market created a healthy shock absorber.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurates the Delhi section of Dwarka Expressway and Urban Extension Road-II. Union Minister Nitin Gadkari, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta and Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Saini are also seen | PTI

Need states' cooperation to implement reforms: Modi

ANUP VERMA @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the Centre has circulated the draft of next-generation GST reforms among states and sought their cooperation to implement the proposal before Diwali. He said the move would benefit the poor, the middle class, and businesses of all sizes.

Addressing an event after inaugurating two expressways, Modi said the Centre intends to make the GST law simpler and revise tax rates. The GST Council is expected to meet next month to deliberate on the proposal.

"For us, reform means the expansion of good governance," Modi said, adding that continuous focus was being placed on reforms. "This Diwali, citizens will receive a double bonus through the GST reform." He expressed hope that states would swiftly support the initiative, ensuring the new structure could be rolled out before the festive season.

Under the plan, the existing four GST slabs—5%, 12%, 18%, and 28%—will be replaced with just two: 5% and 18%, along with a special 40% bracket for demerit or 'sin' goods such as tobacco and online gaming. Items currently taxed at 12%, like butter, fruit juices, and dry fruits, would move to 5%, while electronics, cement, and other goods from the 28% slab would shift to 18%, as per the proposal.

The reform aims to prevent accumulation of input tax credit and reduce demands for further tweaks. While the changes may initially cause revenue loss, the Centre expects increased consumption to offset the impact. Nearly 99% of goods in the 12% category and 90% of goods in the 28% slab are expected to move to lower rates, easing the burden on households and businesses.

Alongside GST reforms, the prime minister reiterated his call for "vocal for local."

"To make India stronger, we must take inspiration from Chakradhari Mohan (Lord Shri Krishna) to make India self-reliant, we must follow the path of Charkhadhari Mohan (Mahatma Gandhi)," Modi said.

Maha guv Radhakrishnan is BJP's pick for next V-P

NDA will reach out to Oppn parties to seek their support: Nadda

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR & T MURUGANANDHAM
@ New Delhi / Chennai

THE BJP on Sunday named Maharashtra Governor Chandrapuram Ponnusamy Radhakrishnan (67) as the NDA's consensus candidate for the Vice President's post.

BJP president J P Nadda made the announcement following a meeting of the party's parliamentary board.

Apart from Radhakrishnan, the governors of Gujarat, Karnataka, and Sikkim were also in the shortlist, sources said. After thorough consultation with the core members of the parliamentary board, Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave his final approval.

"The NDA will speak to Opposition parties on getting their support to ensure the election for this second highest constitutional post goes unopposed. We have been, through our senior leaders, contacting the Opposition leaders and we will remain in touch with them," said Nadda.

C P Radhakrishnan

MILESTONES

- Joined Bharatiya Jan Sangh in 1974 at age 17
- **President of TN unit of BJP between 2004 and 2007**
- Chairman of the Coir Board, Kochi in 2016
- **Lok Sabha MP in 1998 and 1999**
- Governor of Jharkhand on February 18, 2023
- **Maharashtra governor on July 31, 2024**

With the nomination of Radhakrishnan, a seasoned leader from Tamil Nadu who belongs to the influential Gounder caste, an OBC community, the BJP hopes to bolster its strength in the southern state. Tamil Nadu, currently governed by the DMK, is scheduled to hold Assembly elections in 2026.

If elected, Radhakrishan will be the third leader from Tamil Nadu to reach the second-highest constitutional position in the country—after Dr Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan (1952-1962) and R Venkataraman (1984-87). Both later became President.

Born in Tiruppur on October 20, 1957, Radhakrishnan took interest in the activities of the RSS at a very young age and joined the Bharatiya Jan Sangh, the political wing of the RSS, in 1974 at the age of 17.

Radhakrishnan's nomination will be officially filed on August 21, with all NDA leaders including the chiefs of the TDP and JDU, accompanying the nominee, sources said. P7

EXPRESS READ

Red alert for several Karnataka dists

Bengaluru: IMD has issued a red alert for several districts in Karnataka, warning of "very heavy to extremely heavy rain" for August 18 and 19. The alert is in force for Udupi, Dakshina Kannada, Shivamogga, Chikkamagaluru, and Uttara Kannada. An orange alert has been sounded for Belagavi and Haveri P2

ECI terms vote theft charges 'baseless'

New Delhi: The Election Commission on Sunday made public the list of 65 lakh omitted voters from the draft electoral roll of Bihar, following a SC directive on August 14. CEC Gyanesh Kumar said those leveling charges of 'vote theft' should either give proof within 7 days or allegations will be considered 'baseless' P8

KARNATAKA STATE ROAD SAFETY AUTHORITY

Speed is not the priority: Follow the speed limits.

Sri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister

Sri D.K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister

A 24-year-old son died in a road crash as he was speeding on his motorcycle. His wife also succumbed to death due to the unbearable grief of losing her only son. The man who lost his son and wife suggests everyone: "Even if it's a bit late, drive slowly and reach safely." Protect your family from road tragedies.

Overspeeding is a punishable offense under Section 183 of Motor Vehicles Act, 1988.

Sri K Ramalinga Reddy
Hon'ble Minister for Transport & Muzrai
at a departmental programme.

A momentary lapse can lead to a life changing trauma for you and your family. Drive responsibly and follow the speed limits.

Protecting public property and refraining from violence
A constitutional fundamental duty of every Indian

SLOW DOWN FOLLOW THE SPEED LIMIT